

518-24 SOUTH SIXTH STREET (Four-plex)
Jeannette
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6136

HABS
PA
65-JEAN,
37-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

518-24 SOUTH SIXTH STREET (FOUR-PLEX)

HABS No. PA-6136

- LOCATION: 518-24 South Sixth Street, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania
- SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as “The Glass City” early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A widow named Desiree Vieslet purchased these two lots from McKee in 1893, four years after the first land sales in the neighborhood. She evidently married Vislet Zellers, later listed as a gatherer in the glass works, the following year. The Zellers are listed as living in Jeannette on the deed records, but they do not appear in city directories. Addresses were not assigned in this part of Jeannette until after 1900, so the first reliable listing of tenants comes from the 1910 census. Living here that year were four families: the Rosellas, Thompsons, Chianis and Beers. The Rosellas were a couple, but the other households had seven, seven and ten members respectively.

The Rosellas immigrated here from France in the 1880s, and Pietro was employed as a laborer in the window works. The head of the Thompson family, Harry, was a gatherer in the glass works and had a wife and five children. Mike Chiani worked as a laborer in the window works and lived in number 522 with his wife Marie, daughter Pearl, and four boarders. Three generations of the Beers family lived in number 524. The head of the family was Agnes Beers and her four sons, one of whom was a widower and one of whom was married, worked in the glass and rubber works.

The executor of Desiree Vieslet Zeller’s estate sold the property in 1921, and after a short interim ownership, Esther Gold, later Esther Gross, purchased the property in 1924. Abraham Gross, Esther’s husband, was part of Hodes & Co. groceries and meats at 618 Clay Avenue (see HABS No. PA-6105). The couple was listed as living in number 518 in the late 1920s and owned the building as rental property into the 1970s.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Four wood-frame dwelling built from 1894 to 1910 make up this simple four-family house. Actually made up of two pairs of symmetrical units of differing sizes, the building owners made several successive additions to each half between 1894 and 1910 to make the row into one almost-uniform building. A rear addition on 518-20 dates from after 1925. The front porch is not indicated on Sanborn Maps, but appears to be contemporary with the earlier parts of the building. The scrollwork brackets are one of only two examples of decorative exterior Victorian woodwork in the neighborhood. Some other detail may have been lost with the installation of aluminum siding.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1916, 1925.

Deed Books. Record of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania. 211/275, 711/450, 776/96, 806/302, 806/304, 2329/144.

City Directories, 1897, 1913, 1923, 1928, 1948, 1960.

Tax Assessment Books. Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Office, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1910 census manuscripts on microfilm.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.